

Paging remains a critical part of a robust emergency response

With the push from NHSX – a joint unit bringing together teams from the Department of Health and Social Care and NHS England and NHS Improvement to drive the digital transformation of care – to transition from the use of old 'bleep' style pagers, it is important to remember the critical role of paging technology when it comes to major incidents. Next generation paging technology has enabled evolution from the traditional bleep system, and ensured it remains a critical part of a robust emergency response.

PageOne has been at the forefront of critical communications for 30 years, enabling coordination of efforts in times where WiFi and mobile networks fail, such as the Westminster Bridge attacks and the London bombings.



Communication mix

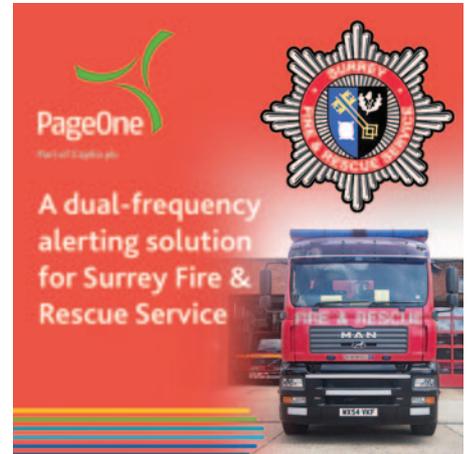
Emergency services are on the frontline of protecting the public. Resilient and secure critical communications are essential for getting the right response team to the right place at the right time; there is no room for error. Pager technology is a vital part of

the communication mix, enabling communication in emergencies where other systems may fail.

Recently, Surrey Fire and Rescue Service needed to replace its on-call alerters, and selected the dual frequency s.QUAD pager, which operates on both the local fire and rescue service network and PageOne's national paging network to improve coverage and resilience.

The service has the ability to undertake first line faulting and programming of the pagers itself, and as a result, was able to reduce the overall quantity of devices and associated maintenance costs. Group messages to multiple officers and targeted groups are very useful and only target recipients that need to be alerted.

Extensive programming options allow the pagers to be tailored to the requirements of the individual, the group, or the user type (officer, support staff or retained firefighter).



So, while the use of new technology may be deemed by some to be the best approach, effective critical communication must rely on technology that can maintain communication in the most demanding and extenuating circumstances and paging continues to play a vital role.

www.pageone.co.uk/case-studies/surrey-fire-and-rescue-service

Online promotion process saves thousands

Shropshire Fire and Rescue Service (Shropshire FRS) has taken advantage of technological advancements and revolutionised its promotion process, saving £34,000.

Supported by VCA Ltd, an emergency services recruitment specialist, Shropshire FRS is one of only a handful of services across the UK to move its Career Progression Gateway (CPG) process online and implement the latest guidelines, set out in the National Fire Chiefs Council (NFCC) leadership framework.

The new method helps to identify future managers, assesses leadership qualities through five different stages of management – from Firefighter to Area Manager – and has also created clear progression paths for all operational roles.

The process has now moved entirely online and allowed assessments to continue throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and social distancing measures as part of the pandemic provided a timely opportunity to review recruitment and promotion.

Donna Trowsdale, Development Officer and Project Leader, said, "We are delighted with the new assessment programme and importantly our candidates going through the process are comfortable too. It's completely transparent and supports our commitment to the development and progression of staff and ensuring a fair and consistent approach to promotion."

Personalised feedback

Assessors are occupational psychologists promoting fairness and the 'remote' and independent method of assessment decreases any potential for bias. Reporting is generated automatically, providing the service with efficient scoring available online.

Candidates also receive a personalised feedback report identifying their strengths and areas for development against a national framework and an action plan for areas to develop in the future. This is complemented by an optional feedback session over the telephone with the assessor.

Impressive savings

Chief Fire Officer Rod Hammerton said, "The savings are impressive, based on the same number of candidates attending over the next five years as in 2020, we are set to save around £170,000.

"Due to the agile nature of our service and its ability to respond quickly, the COVID-19 pandemic didn't impact on our ability to fulfil roles within the service and our findings will be shared with our partners at Hereford and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service when they are ready to take the step."

www.shropshirefire.gov.uk

Capita contract

Capita has secured a five-year contract worth £788,000 to deliver an integrated communication control system to North Wales Fire and Rescue Service (NWFRS), to support its transition to the new Emergency Services Network (ESN).

Capita's DS3000 software solution will support NWFRS in transforming its control room operations and will maintain connectivity to both the current Airwave emergency network and ESN when it becomes available. Capita will also provide a fully managed support service.

The new solution includes an ESN-ready 'dispatch communication server' interface that will enable NWFRS to connect to the new system to maintain mission-critical communications.

DS3000 provides a single touchscreen control capability to deliver a unified platform for telephone and radio communications, both crucial to control room operations.

Capita's software will deliver a resilient service that is replicated across both the main and 'fall-back' control rooms. In addition to connecting both control rooms sites, the DS3000 will enable access to a third, 'out-of-area' site. This will improve telephone resilience and increase technical capacity to the control room as a whole.

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